

THE
BELIEVER'S
Daily Exercise :
O R,

The Scripture Precept of being in the
Fear of the Lord all the day long.
Explained and urged, in Four Sermons.

By *John Billingsley*, Minister of the
Gospel.

Gen. 5. 24. *And Enoch walked with God,
and he was not : for God took him.*

1 Tim. 4. 7. *Exercise thyself unto Godli-
ness.*

2 Pet. 3. 11. *Seeing then that all these
things shall be dissolved, what manner of
persons ought ye to be in all holy conversa-
tion and godliness ?*

L O N D O N,

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XX
XX

To his Beloved Auditors the
Inhabitants of S. in the
County of N. and the Vil-
lages adjacent.

My very dear Friends,

THese Sermons were first Preached
in your hearing; at your desire
they become thus publick; which I should
never have suffered them to have been,
had I not hoped your spiritual good might
be some way advanced thereby: For I
am conscious that the World is already
full of Books; yea, that divers have
written on this very Subject, and that I
am no ways capable of doing it so well,
as it is done already: But your extraor-
dinary affection to my unworthy Person
and Labours, may (by Gods blessing)
make a meaner thing from me more
acceptable, and so more useful to you,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

than the more Learned Labours of others that you are less acquainted with. My many infirmities both of body and mind, tell me, I am like to be of little use in the World; but what little I am capable (by Divine Assistance) of doing for the glory of God, and the good of Souls, I am very desirous (if God see it good) it may henceforth be among you. For this little Book, I desire you will make it your Pocket companion; read it frequently, and practise it, and I shall have no cause (whatever censure it expose me to) to repent its Publication, nor you the Perusal of it. That your best good may be effectually promoted by this and all my poor endeavours, is the hearty prayer of

An affectionate desirer of
your Soul-prosperity,

John Billingsley.

The

The Believers Daily Exercise.

Prov. ch. xxiii. v. 17. *Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.*

THE *firmest Believers* have their fits of *Unbelief*, and the *strongest Faith* has some *intermissions* and *abatings* of its vigorous exercise. Peter that had Faith to leave the *Ship*, and set his feet on the *Waves*, to give his Lord the meeting; yet when the Winds grew boisterous his *unbelief* had sunk him, had not Jesus lent him a *hand*, and by one word of his mouth stilled a *double Tempest*, that of the Winds and Waves *without*, and that of his Disciples Fear *within*, *Matth. ch. xiv. from v. 22, to 33.*

The People of God are a *thinking People*: They are apt to take notice of, and observe those passages of Providence which an *unthinking World* let slip *unregarded*. And in their *first thoughts* of the Ways of God they are *sometimes mistaken*, and *often at a stand*: And in nothing are they more ordinarily at a *loss*, or sooner *surprized*, than in the *con-*

A 3

sideration

consideration of the state of good and bad men here in this World. They believe a just and holy Providence governs the Affairs of this lower World; and this puts them sometimes to wonder how it comes to pass that the Righteous should be so often persecuted and perplexed, while the wicked are in peace and safety, flourishing like a green Bay-tree, having more than heart can wish, Psal. xxxvii. 1. & Psal. Lxxiii. 3.

And while they are thus intent upon the consideration of the present glory of the wicked, and the poor and dejected state of the godly, no wonder if the Tempter pursue his advantages against them, and they feel in their hearts some motions of envy and emulation; thinking the wicked's prosperity too much, and inordinately wishing themselves a share of it. This the wise men here warns us against; Let not thine heart envy sinners; q d. Let not their Prosperity seem a great matter in thine Eye; entertain no thought of wishing to change places with them; remember in whose choice and appointment both their and thine own **Lot** is: Fear God, and thou wilt not fret at, or envy sinners. The great Preservative against this, as well as all other vices is, to have the fear of God always before our Eyes.

Envy

*Envy*ing finners is a *disease* the Godly are sometimes apt to fall into; the *Anti-dote*, prescribed by the best *Physician*, is, to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long: This indeed is a *Panpharmacon*, an *All-heal*; the fear of God is an effectual remedy as against *Envy*, so against *Pride*, *Covetousness*, *Sensuality*, *Hypocrisie* and whatever distempers else our Souls are Subject and Liable to: It is meet therefore that we should always be provided of it, and carry it about with us continually.

Be thou.] This necessary Precept is directed to every one in particular; Be we Young or Old, Rich or Poor, Learned or Unlearned, Superiours or Inferiours, Bond or Free; of whatever Rank or Condition we be, this Precept belongs to us, and we ought every one to take it to our selves.

In the fear of the Lord.] Have a lively sense of the Being, Attributes, Presence and Providence of God; that he beholds all thy actions, and that he will render to thee according to thy works. Fear in this place implies Reverence, Love, and Obedience: Let a Principle of Religion possess thy Soul, and be the Governor and Director of thy Life and Actions. 'Walk

‘with God. Live by Rule, order thy
‘Conversation aright; this is to be in
‘the fear of the Lord.

All the day long.] Continually, throughout thy whole life, every day and in every part of the day. Religion is to be our whole employment; we are not to own or allow our selves in any one action that is not Religious: From our waking in the morning, to our lying down at night, we are to see that we be in the fear of the Lord. I do not say that we must turn Eubites, and spend all our time in acts of immediate Worship, Praying, Hearing, Meditation, &c. But we must do no deliberate act that for its principle and end does not deserve to be denominated a Religious action. Our very Eating, Drinking, Sleeping, Buying, Selling, Visiting, Recreating of our selves, must be a walking according to the Gospel Rule, if we would have peace, and a blessing from Heaven upon us.

The Doctrine I shall give you from the words is this:

Doct. That it should be the continual study and endeavour of every one of us to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long: Or, The Religious spending of our whole time should be our daily exercise. The

The Method of handling this important truth shall be,

1. To shew you what the nature of this exercise is, to open to you this being in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

2. Why we must be daily taken up and exercised in the religious employment of our whole time; And here I shall lay down the Reasons and Motives that are proper to enforce this Practice upon us, and perswade us to it.

3. I shall conclude with some Inferences and Practical Remarks upon the whole.

I. *To open to you this being in the Fear of the Lord all the day long: And this I shall do by laying before you the several parts of your daily duty, that so you may be directed in the orderly performance of it. Many neglect the great business of Christianity because they do not well understand what it is; or if they know something of it in general, yet their notions are but confused, and they know not how to place and order their duties. For your help in this, I shall lay before you the following Scheme of good employments for every day; which whosoever Prudently, Sincerely, Cheerfully and*
Constantly

Constantly observes, does (in some good measure) come up to this Divine Rule, of being in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

I. If you will be in the fear of the Lord all the day long, you must see that the fear of the Lord be in you: Look well that a principle of Grace and Regeneration be wrought in your Soul. A dead man cannot work or walk; you must make the tree good, or the fruit will be naught. A graceless Soul cannot do a gracious action; much less is it to be expected that he should engage and persist in a course of holiness. How many in a pang of Conviction, and under present fears of Death and Hell, resolve that they will lead new lives, they will be drunk no more, they will leave their loose Companions, they will Pray, and Read, and Hear, and do no body knows what? But their goodness is but like a morning Cloud, and early Dew that soon passeth away, they dream of leading new lives, without getting new hearts: Whereas if you will to purpose reform your lives, you must begin with your hearts: 'Get a deep sense of sin, see your need of Christ, cry to God for Pardon and Grace, be restless till you feel your Souls

‘ Souls possess with the Spirit of a holy
 ‘ Life, Light and Love, till you be made
 ‘ partakers of a Divine Nature, new crea-
 ‘ tures in whom all old things are passed
 ‘ away, and all things are become new.

*A new heart is virtually a new life, inas-
 much as it will certainly produce it;
 whereas a seeming new Life, while the
 old unsanctified heart, with its unmortified
 Lusts, remains, is but a dead Image, (a
 painted carcass,) a thing that as it does
 not live, so it cannot last.*

2. *Begin every day with God.* When I
 awake (saith the holy Psalmist) I am
 still with thee, *Psal. 139. 18.* Labour
 that your *first thoughts* may be of God,
 and Christ, and Heaven. Use your Souls,
 upon their first release, from the *Fetters*
of sleep, to work towards God in *thankful*
acknowledgments, and *deep admirations* of
 his goodness, with very *humbling reflecti-*
ons on your own *frailty and vileness*; Say,
 Lord, what is man that thou art mindful
 of him, or the Son of Man that thou vi-
 sitest him? *Psal. viii. 4.* Lift up a Prayer
 for protection from *sin and danger*
 throughout the *new day* God is pleased
 to give you. Think how many have
 passed the night in *Pain and Misery*, and
 how

how many *Souls* may be this night gone into *Eternity*, while you have slept sweetly and safely, and bless God for his mercy to you, and labour to make a wise and holy improvement of it. ' Good thoughts at our first waking, season our hearts for all day.

3. *Waste no time in needless sleep or waking sloth.* How many that are horribly afraid to die, yet make no matter of giving away a vast proportion, and that of the very best, the flower of their time, to death's Image and Brother Sleep? O think how many are suing out & obtaining their pardon, and making sure their Salvation, while you lie Sleeping and Snoring; and have not you *Souls* as well as they? Have not you as much need of Christ and Grace and Heaven as they? Remember excessive Sleep is neither good for Body nor Soul. All cannot do with the like measure of Sleep, but there are very few but might do with a great deal less than they do: And of those that are not guilty of indulging the Body in this respect, how many more are there that abridge themselves for the World, than that do it for God and their Souls? And is the World a better Master, think you, than God and Christ?

Christ? And is Gold a better purchase than Grace? And then when you are awake, *slugg* not as many do, turning upon their beds like a door upon its hinges; much less contrive *do* mischief upon your Beds, let not contemplative wickedness find that time to steal into your hearts. But shake off sloath, and as soon as true necessity will give leave, be stirring; Remember morning hours are the cream of time, more precious than the filings of Gold or dust of Pearl, therefore throw them not away.

4. Be not long in dressing, and lose not even that time, but think of some apparel for the Soul. Be not like the gaudy Butterflies, and gay Peacocks of our days, that spend their best hours between the Comb and the Glass; and so their Bodies be but fine, care not how filthy their Souls are. Remember Cloaths came in to cover that nakedness of which sin had made us ashamed, and therefore they should be a constant memorial to us of the fall of our first Parents, and ours in them; and to be proud of them, or to make a great deal of stir and do about them, is very foolish and absurd, as well as wicked. Count that fashion of apparel the best, that being sufficient

sufficient for *Warmth* and *Decency* truly so called, requires least time in putting on. To spend *an hour* every morning in *Tricking* and *Trimming* the *Body*, and to think *half an hour* for *Reading* and *Prayer* too much, is to me no very good sign than he or she whose ordinary practice is such, is a real hearty Christian. And you whose apparel is really *Grave* and *Decent*, the time that is spent in putting it on, let it not be wholly taken up in that, but let your minds be employed in *suitable Meditations*: Think of putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, he is the only cloathing for your Souls, that the shame of your nakedness may not appear: You would be ashamed to go naked into the Company of your Neighbours; O be ashamed of sin which is the Souls nakedness! While you are dressing, think what *Temptations* you are like to meet with in the day, and labour to fence against them; forelay the employments of the day, meditate on some Scripture promise or the like.

5. Go not out of your Chamber, or Lodging Room (without urgent necessity) till you have offered up your morning Sacrifice of Prayer and Praise unto God. He that is to travel among Thieves had need go armed.

Origen

Origen complains that that day he burnt Incense to the Idol, he went out without Prayer. It's ill going into *infectious* places fasting, and it's dangerous going into an *infectious World* prayerless. Truly, I cannot but look upon him, as an *unreasonably bold* man, that dares go out into the *World without Prayer*: Dost thou know but *Death* may meet thee before thou comest in again? Dost thou know but God may leave thee to do *that*, that shall bring upon thee an *infamous death* and *everlasting damnation*?

Take heed to thy self therefore, and go not out till thou hast prayed: But then, see also that thou pray in *Faith*, and with *Fervency*: Do not content thy self to have said a *few words by rote*, that thou callest a *Prayer*; but pray with *understanding*, and pray with *Feeling* and *Affection*: 'Confess thy sins both of *Nature* and *Life*, and beg of God the *Pardon* of them for *Christ's sake*; be earnest for *Grace* and *Sanctification*, for *guidance* and *direction* to lead a *holy Life*, and *Support* and *Comfort*, that thou maist die in *Peace*: Pray for the *Church of Christ*, yea for the *Heathen World*, for the *Land of thy Nativity*,
' *especi-*

' especially for the Continuance and Suc-
 ' cess of the Gospel therein: Pray also
 ' for thy Relations, for thy Friends, yea
 ' and for thy Enemies. And remem-
 ' ber with thy Confessions and Prayers,
 ' to join Praises and Thanksgivings; a-
 ' dore the Divine Excellencies and Per-
 ' fections, and acknowledge thankfully
 ' the Favours and Benefits you receive
 ' from his hand: Express an hearty sense
 ' of Creating, Preserving and Redeem-
 ' ing Love: Recount the personal, fami-
 ' ly and publick mercies you have re-
 ' ceived or shared in; and as you have the
 ' Use and Comfort, so let God have the
 ' Praise and Glory of them. If thou be
Weak and Ignorant, get some one that is
able and willing to instruct thee: Pray as
thou canst; make use of some *good form*
till thou canst do better; but take heed
of formality, and resting in the *work done*;
 narrowly watch and observe thy heart;
 thou givest God *nothing*, if thou givest
 him, not thy *Heart*.

6. Join reading of the holy Scriptures,
 and (when time will permit, especially on the
 Lords days) the choicest practical Books,
 with your morning Devotions. For daily
 reading the Scriptures, it is of absolute ne-
 cessity,

cessity, and no more to be omitted than Prayer it self: It is the Word of God; you have Christ's command to search the Scriptures, *Joh. v. 39.* It is the 'Godly man's Character, that his delight 'is in the Law of the Lord, and in his 'Law doth he meditate day and night, 'Psal. i. 2. It is the *food* of your Souls, 'without daily supplies whereof you will 'famish. Read with deliberation, with 'intention of mind, labour to *understand* 'what you read, and to *feel* it; read it as 'God's Word, and above all, bring to it 'a serious resolution of practising what 'you read.

Obj. *But I cannot read?*

Sol. The more shame for you, if you be grown up, and have your Eye-sight.

If you cannot read, do your best to learn, and that speedily. If there were Lands to be settled upon all that could read the Conveyances of them, we should see people learn apace; will you do more for *Pelf* than for your *Souls*?

However, till you can read, or such of you as having been able to read, may now be disabled through blindness or weakness of sight, &c. Get others to read to you, and attend to the Word read with

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your

your utmost diligence, *as for your Life*. If you refuse this Counsel, Remember when you come to die, or when your *ignorance and folly* shall have thrust you into *Hell*, that you were warned of the time when you would cry out, Oh! how have I hated instruction, and refused to be reformed? For *good Books*, I shall only say, we have great choice of them, and you will do well to redeem what time you can for the reading of them, especially, where there is *seldom or sorry* Preaching, and age or sickness keeps any from the *Publick Assemblies*; God is pleased to bless these to be the means of much good to many Souls. Only take heed of *erroneous Books* of Antinomians, Quakers, Papists, &c. And of *opposing* private reading to hearing of the Word publickly Preached: For my part, I would *hear* the weakest Minister (supposing him a true Minister) that ever spake with a Tongue, rather than stay at home to *read* the best Book that ever was written; For God says, Faith cometh by *hearing*, *Rom. x. 17*. And though he *can* work Faith by reading, and it may be hoped *will* do, where people are deprived of opportunities of hearing, yet that

that is not to be expected where they are slighted.

And here for the sake of *beginners in Religion*, who are oft imposed upon, to the loss of their *time*, and the danger of their *Souls*, by ill chosen Books, I will venture to name a *very few*, and those not *bulky*, which I take to be *exceeding sound*, and I will add a *few hints*, how you may read them to best purpose: I will name but these eight.

1. *The Assemblies Confession and Catechisms with the proofs at large, lately reprinted, in Octavo.*
2. *Mr. Daniel Burgess's four little Tracts, Call to sinners, Questions, &c. Twelves.*
3. *Showers Reflections on Time and Eternity. Twelves.*
4. *Joseph Alleins Alarm to the Unconverted. Octavo.*
5. *Richard Alleins Vindication of Godliness, three parts. Octavo.*
6. *Steel's Trades-mans Calling. Octavo.*
7. *Ford's Practical use of Infant Baptism. Octavo.*
8. *Doolittel on the Lord's Supper, two parts. Twelves.*

I would have you read these Books in the order I have named them, *one at once*, (always continuing the joint reading of the Scriptures *with* and *before* all Books of humane compofure;) read one thorow, yea I would advise *thrice over*, before you begin another; with a Pen or Pencil mark *weighty* and *affecting* passages, and at leifure *write* fome of them out, if you can write; else *read them the oftner over*.

Now to fuch as are grown Chriftians, I commend to you,

A Difcourfe concerning Old Age, tending to the *Inftruction, Caution, and Comfort* of aged People; By Rich. Steel, Minifter of the Gofpel: And, *A Word to the Aged*, by Will. Bridge, Minifter of the Gofpel.

Begin and end every reading with Prayer to God for his bleffing, and *inter-dine* what you read with frequent *paufes* of Prayer and Meditation; fet your felf *heartily* and *speedily* to the practice of every *Duty* and *Direction* you meet with, and depend on God by *Faith* for *Assistance* and *Acceptance* thorow Chrift. **These** A few Books thus read will yield you more comfort

comfort in a dying hour, than Kings will then be able to fetch from their Crowns, Adisers from their Bags, or hypocritical dogmatists from all their airy speculations, contentious wranglings, or haughty and confident (tho' empty and groundless) pretensions and expectations.

7. When you go out into the World, be watchful against it. Remember, you walk among snares; consider what variety of Temptations you are daily exposed unto, and be upon your guard; especially look well,

1. When you are alone, to your Thoughts, O what a World of Time do vain Thoughts that lodge within us rob us of! how many covetous, proud, sensual thoughts crawl in our Hearts in a day? How do we all over again our former Sins by Contemplation? How many study and project wickedness, and contrive in their thoughts how to bring wicked devices to pass? Remember, God sees thy heart, and will reckon with thee for thy thoughts: See therefore that they be pure, holy, charitable, humble: Do not look upon thy self as at liberty to think what thou wilt; "He is a Christian indeed that governs his Thoughts.

2. When

2. *When you are in Company, look to your Tongues ; consider your speech : Weigh what you are a going to say, before you speak it. Do not throw about fire brands, arrows and death, and say, Am I not in sport ? Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. Remember Life and Death are in the Power of the Tongue, Prov. xviii. 21. The prodigious licentiousness of the Professors of this Age in this matter, makes it needful to use more than ordinary Caution, that we catch not the infection. How common is it in all places, to hear people speaking evil of the things and persons that they know not ? Jude ver. 10. Sure we do not understand the genius, spirit, and temper of the Christian Religion, whereof we make profession : Does not Christ say, By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned ? Mat. xii. 37. Doth not the Apostle James say, If any man among you seem to be Religious, and bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, this mans Religion is vain : Jam. i. 26. Alas, alas ! that so few that are called Christians do indeed believe their Bibles to be the Word of God, or take any care to frame their Lives by the Rules of it. Let your Speech be alway*

with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man, Col. iv. 6. O Sirs, where shall one find the company that converses by this Rule? If talking of fashions, if telling tales of our Neighbours, if aspersing the Government be this gracious savory speech, we have a great deal of it every where; besides the lying, swearing, ribaldry, &c. of the openly prophane: These things are a Lamentation, and should be for a Lamentation! O let us be more wise; consider Sirs, you may do more mischief by your tattling of things that you understand not, and that do not concern you, in a few minutes, than the best endeavours of your whole life may ever be able to repair. Remember, your Tongues are your glory, turn them not into shame; but glorifie God with them. ‘Go and visit your sick Neighbours, or such as are troubled in mind, and instruct and comfort them; Go and reprove plainly those that are prophane and wicked, and beseech them to have some mercy on their own Souls; stir up such as are able to relieve them that are in want and distress; Consider one another to provoke to love and to good works, Heb. x. 24.

And

And of *this* you will have joy in the day of accounts.

8. *Let the main part of every day be spent in the labours of your particular Calling; unless (as now and then it may happen, but cannot ordinarily) there be very good reason to the contrary. Look upon your Calling as a main part of the service of your Generation, which God and your Countrey expects from you, and of which you are to be accountable. Diligent labour is a Duty, and there is a blessing belongs to it: It keeps the Mind from rust, the Body from diseases. Idleness is the source of wickedness. Quem otiosum invenit Diabolus occupat. Little do men think what miseries and mischiefs they expose themselves to, when they grow remiss and negligent in their particular Callings. The Apostle bids us study to be quiet, and do our own business, 1 Thel. iv. 11. They that neglect their own business, often grow pragmatical, and must be meddling with other folks, the consequences whereof are dreadful. No man fouls his fingers with doing his own Work,* is an Out-landish Proverb that has its weight, and is worth our thinking of, when we are *idle or ill employed.*

Adam

Adam, where art thou? is a question we should think we hear God asking us every day.

Obj. *It may be thy Calling is mean.*

Sol. *Be content*, it is that which the Providence of God hath chosen for thee, and he knows best what is good for every one of us; and he will accept a *day-labourer* that is diligent in his Calling, as well as a *Knight* or a *Lord*.

Obj. *Aye, but mine is the toilingest, drudging, slavish Life in the World.*

Sol. The harder labour thy Calling puts thee upon (so it be consistent with thy health, and proportionate to thy strength) the better it is for thee; thy Body is an unruly masterly Servant, that needs taming; Labour kills Lust. But if indeed thy Calling be above thy strength, or endangering to thy health, (as the Apostle saith in another case, 1 Cor. 7. 21.) If thou maist be free, use it rather.

And then, in your Calling see that you sincerely aim at Gods glory and publick service, and not meerly and chiefly at your own wealth and gain, or the raising of your Selves and Families in the World. That is all lost labour that terminates ultimately in self.

9. *Look to the exercise of Justice and Charity in buying and selling.* And here our Saviours Golden Rule may serve instead of all particular Rules, *Mat. vii. 12.*

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.

Therefore, 'Draw not immoderately
'from them to your selves; make no ad-
'vantage of their ignorance or neces-
'sity; count not every man you deal
'with a Knave, (which is a *Rule in Com-*
merce, that some people *value* them-
selves much upon, who yet, I suppose,
would think it very *hard* to have the
same measure meted unto them.) 'Lie
'not at catch for an advantage; impose
'not ill wares for good; break not your
'day for delivery of goods, or payment
'of moneys; strive not to make a great
'figure in the World, when you know
'you have not wherewith to support it,
'(which is indeed to set up for a com-
'mon Cheat;) exact not upon your poor
'Brethren in cases of Forfeitures, Mort-
'gages, &c. Consider the equity of Gods
Laws to the Jews in such cases, and
remember that Christianity requires of
us a *more large and extensive Charity*. In
a word, digest the above-mentioned
Precept

Precept of our Lord, and ever and anon quicken Conscience to attend to it, and take your measures of acting thence.

10. *Maintain Sobriety, Temperance, and a serious thankful frame of spirit in eating and drinking.* Take direction not from appetite, but from reason, both for the quantity and quality of your Food. Do not study too much to please, and do not at all pamper the flesh. *Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lust thereof,* Rom. xiii. v. 14. Consider the end of the rich glutton, that fared sumptuously every day, Luke xvi. 19 24. Think how many want what you waste. Remember, their end is destruction, whose God is their Belly, Phil. iii. 19. Take heed of being bewitched with the love of strong drink: *Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, whosoever is deceived thereby, is not wise,* Prov. xx. 1. Remember what it did to Noah, Gen. ix. 21.

And then be not content with *meer Temperance*, in which it may be when you have done *all you can*, some Heathens have *out-stripped you*, but mix your meals with good discourse; own God in bodily provisions; beg his blessing on them and seriously bless him for them. *Whe-*

ther you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, let all be done to the glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31.

II. Be moderate in Recreations, subordinate them to the great ends of your Life, and see they be lawful and seasonable. Two

Rules * an Eminent Divine gives about Recreations among others, specially worth our notice.

* Mr. Whately
Redemption
of Time.

1. Never allow your selves any Recreation, till you be come to some degree of weariness in some pious or honest employment. ' Begin not the day with 'Recreation.

2. Spend no more time in Recreation any day, than you spend in the private or secret duties of Religion. And this Rule, though to some it may seem severe, he thinks sufficiently warranted by that of our Saviour, *Mat. vi. 33. Seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness.* I add, ' Take heed of passion, and the loss of Time; Remember, Recreation is no ' Mans business: God hath not placed us in the World, as Leviathan in the Sea, to play therein: We must but sip, not drink of these dangerous sweets; *tantum canis ad nilum*, a lap and away: Take them as that

that we need, not as that we love. When once Recreations begin to inveigle our affections, though in themselves they be never so lawful, it is time to lay them aside.

12. Every day rejoice with trembling. Mix a humbling sense of our own sins, with a thankful sense of Gods mercies. Indulge not a sullen sorrow, neither let our Joy degenerate into frothiness and levity. Maintain an evenness of spirit between the immoderate carefulness of such as are swallowed up of over-much sorrow, and the carnal jollity of such as on light occasions are transported into ravishment, or on greater ones, forget the causes they have not to be puffed up, but to be humbled rather. When God gives you the greatest mercies, think how little you deserve; and when he exerciseth you with the greatest afflictions, think he is before hand with you, both in what he hath bestowed upon you, what he offers to you, and what he hath laid up for you.

13. Let no day pass without some serious heart-affecting thoughts of your last day. Pray, Lord, teach me so to number my days, as to apply my heart unto wisdom, Psal. xc. v. 12. One being asked what Philosophy was, gave it this definition; *Philosophia*

est meditatio mortis ; and undoubtedly, the
 thorough consideration of Death, has a large
 place in the *Christian Philosophy*. ' The
 Gospel Doctrine is *Ars moriendi*, the
 ' Art of Dying ; viz. in and to the Lord.
 And how unpleasant soever this study
 may seem to corrupt nature, there is none
 more necessary for us than it. Serious
 thoughts of Death are very powerful to
 convince of the evil of sin, of the vanity
 of the World, of the excellency of Grace, and
 the wisdom of laying up Treasure in Heaven.
 O ! did men think, as they ought, of
 their latter end, they would not raise
 such a dust as they do in the World, for
 applause and preferment, there would not
 be such pride and pomp, such bribery and
 oppression, such luxury and sensuality among
 professed Christians as there is. Serious
 thoughts of Death would be one of the
 most effectual cures of Hypocrisie in the
 World ; for who would very much care
 what men say or think of him, that con-
 siderers how soon he must lye buried out
 of their sight, and forgotten by them as if
 he had never been ? When Hypocrites see
 they must die, it makes them in earnest,
 and if they had been so in time, they had
 been sincere. Who would trifle with God
 that

that *knows* and *considers* how soon he *must* be at his *Bar*? It were impossible for men to live as they do, did they but *once* every day seriously think *they must die*; this thought would either reform them, or torment them: And that sinners seem to be aware of, whence, because they have no mind of either, they do all they can to put *Death* out of their thoughts.

14 Observe and improve the *Methods* of *Providence* and *Grace* every day, and record your *Experiences* for future guidance and encouragement. It is a great point of *spiritual wisdom*, to notice aright Gods dealings in his *Providence* with our selves and others, so as to make just *Inferences* therefrom, and none but such: And also to observe the *secret approaches* of the *Divine goodness* to our Souls, in the way of *gracious influence*, from the Spirit of Holiness. Whatever God does in the ways of *common providence*, or *special grace*, he expects we should regard and consider, and improve it; when *sin* finds our selves or others out, we should lye thereby warned how we meddle with that which *Experience* assures us, will cost us dear; when *Obedience* is rewarded, we are to observe it for our encouragement, to walk in such

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ways.

ways as God owns; and in what ways we have found God approaching our Souls with the influences of special grace, and spiritual consolation, we are to be excited still to wait on him therein.

15. Let no special opportunity of furthering your Salvation, glorifying God, or benefiting your Neighbour, slip you unobserved or unimproved. This is to redeem time. Every hour of every day is to be made the best of, but some are capable of a special improvement; like a fair Wind to a Mariner, or a fair day when we are at harvest-work; if we let this slip, such another may not come. *Post est occasio calva.* 'It may be now Christ stands at thy door in the person of a poor Beggar, send him not away without an Alms; see *Mat. xxv.* at the latter end. Perhaps a poor ignorant sinner is by providence cast into thy Family, or thou meetest with such a one upon the Road, or thou hast him upon a sick-bed, willing to hearken to instruction; O do thy utmost to save a Soul from Death, and cover the multitude of sins! *Jam. v. 20.* It may be thou art light into the Company of debauched Sensualists, profane Ranters, Infidel Scoffers; now give a proof of thy

' thy loyalty and fidelity to thy great
 ' Lord and Master. Perhaps thou art un-
 ' der a Cross, and thou feelest thy heart
 ' sensible and tender ; now set to con-
 ' fessing thy sins, and making supplication
 ' for the Life of thy Soul ; now thou hast
 ' a Sabbath, a Market-day for Heaven,
 ' store thy self with Soul-provision ; &
fic de cateris.

18. *Share in the sufferings of the whole
 Body of Christ, and of all the Members of it,
 by such a sympathy as may prove you a living
 Member thereof.* This is the news that a
 right Christian is inquisitive after, how it
 fares with the Churches of Christ, what
 becomes of the Interest of true Religion in
 the World, what hopes there is that the
 Kingdoms of the Earth may become the
 Kingdoms of the Lord and his Christ ? If
 he meets with good tidings as to these
 matters, it glads him at the heart : But if
 he hears of the prevailing of wicked Errors,
 and abominable Idolatries, of the Divisions
 and Scandals of the Professors of Chri-
 stianity, of violent Persecutions against the
 Saints and Servants of the most High
 God ; this wounds him at the very Soul,
 he is so affected, as if he saw one killing his
 Father, forcing his Wife, or butchering the
 fruit

fruit of his own Lains. If Sion sit in the dust, he puts on Sackcloth : And in the particular afflictions of Gods Children that are known to him, he *resents* them deeply, cries to God for their deliverance, and he is willing to be both at *cost* and *pains* that they may want no help that he is capable of affording them. He is not one of the *glib-tongu'd*, *gouty-fisted* Professors, whom the Apostle James characteriseth, James ii. 15, 16. of which sort there are abundance in our days, that if a Brother or Sister be naked, or destitute of daily Food, say unto them, *Depart in peace, be you clothed and filled*, notwithstanding they give them not those things that are needful for the Body. If others sufferings do not make us smart, so that for our own ease besides a great many better considerations, we would do *what in us lies* to help them out of them : I will not say we are *stark naught*, lest I too much discourage you, but I will say, we are *far from what we should be*, and it concerns us to strive hard to become better.

17. Let Heads of Families see they defraud not God of his honour, nor the Souls of theirs of the means of their Spiritual Life; but keep up Family Religion with seriousness,
life,

life, and constancy. He that provideth not for his own, especially for them of his own household, hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel, 1 Tim. v. 8. He is a *Murderer* that provides not *bread* for his Family, unless the Providence of God debar him of *all opportunity* to do it; what is he then, that never breaks the *Bread of Life* to them, but leaves them to *starve and pine away in their iniquities?* *Prayerless Families are Types of Hell.* 'O 'Sirs! let no day pass without calling 'yours together, morning and evening, 'and praying & praising God with them, 'reading the Scriptures to them, ex- 'horting them seriously to remember 'their Creator, and to work out their 'Salvation, and to make their Calling 'and Election sure. How can you think God should bless your *Society* or your *Labours*, while you call not upon his Name? Whence come such *quarrellings* and *discontents*, such *crosses* and *disappointments*, such *outrageous wickednesses* and *disorders* in Families, but from this neglect of *daily worship?* Oh therefore take heed how you let the *World* juggle out the daily exercises of Religion, that ought to be in your Families! For let me tell you,

you, ' All that the World can do for you, when you have got the most of it, cannot make up the loss of one hours ' Communion with God. What will you say and think then, when *for it*, you have shut *your selves* and *yours* out from the *everlasting enjoyment* of God in Heaven ?

18. *Look upon Relative duties as a main part of your daily business as Christians : Be well versed therefore in the Scripture-directory for the discharge of them, and be sure you make conscience of yielding obedience to it. See Eph. v. 22. to chap. vi. 6. Col. iii. 18. to iv. 2. Let yoke-fellows live together in mutual love and helpfulness : Let the Husband excel in Love, and walk with his Wife as a man of Knowledge : Let the Wife see that there be a Law of kindness in her Lips, that she adorn her self with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, that she be not querulous nor imperious, but content with the station Providence has assigned her, and the place wherein both the Light of Nature, and the written Law of Scripture sets her. Let Parents take care for the Children they have been the Instruments of bringing into the World, especially for their Souls,*
and

and to give them *Christian Education*. Let *Children* honour their Parents, reverencing them, loving them, obeying them, requiting them, and not despise them when they grow old, and their parts decay, or ^{when} they have had what they can hope for from them. Let *Masters* carry to their Servants with a due mixture of love and awe, provide them what is needful for the Body, and especially be tender of their Souls, as knowing they must account to God for the Soul of every Servant that cometh under their Roof. And let Servants be humble, diligent, faithful; and let me add, silent, not carrying tales about from one house to another, discovering the secrets of the Family in which they live; this is a base property, and they that are so glib of their Tongues, are seldom fit for any business that requires either skill or industry.

19. Take heed of Formality, and labour to be sincere in all you do. Let not a course of serious Religion seem a drudgery to you, but labour to maintain a holy delight in duties. All this that I have been telling you, will seem to most (especially to them that have never been used to any such thing, and are wholly strangers to it) a great deal. 'So

Obj. ' So much reading and praying, so much labouring such exact watching of our selves, such inspection into ours ; what all this ado for Salvation ! Cannot we get to Heaven at cheaper rates than so ? This is a hard saying, who can hear it ?

Sol. But I pray Sirs, do not think any of this *needless*, till you know better what work is fit to be appointed you, than he *that has set you this* ; nor do not condemn this as *intolerably hard* work, till you have *tried it* ; Some *that have tried it* have said, *they never knew what a pleasant Life meant till then.* Is it such a terrible hard task for a *hungry man* to be set to a *full Table*, and be bid *eat heartily* ? Or for a *man that is dropping into his Grave*, to be bid *drink this pleasant potion and be whole* ? Or for a *Condemned Malefactor* to be bid *thankfully accept his pardon, and be set at Liberty* ? Or for a *banished man* to have leave to *return home*, if he will but *converse an hour or two every day with his nearest Relation, or his dearest Friend* ? Why, such is the task that *Sensualists and Hypocrites* shrink back so from : If men knew what *practical Religion* were, they would equally avoid the opposites, and the

the *Counterfeits* of it; *Love* would cast out *flavish fear*: And God would be worshipped with *sincerity* and *alacrity*, instead of those *forced shews* and that *feigned Devotion* that now alas too generally *corrupts*, yea even *nullifies* the *Christian Worship*.

20. Lastly; *Close the day, as you began it, with God*. Retire, e're you be too sleepy, and examine your selves how you have spent the day; Look over the *foregoing Rules*, and think how you have *complied with* them, or wherein you have *come short*.
 ' Thus ask, what State and Condition is
 ' my Soul in? Am I truly regenerate or
 ' no? Did I this day awake with God?
 ' What were my first Thoughts upon?
 ' Have I not wasted morning hours, or
 ' even minutes, in needless sleep or sloth,
 ' in vain imaginations or contemplative
 ' wickedness? Have I not been too long
 ' in dressing my body, too curious in my
 ' apparel, proud of it? Have I not lost
 ' that time, or have I redeemed it by
 ' holy Meditations, Spiritual Projects
 ' and wise fore-casting how I might best
 ' serve God the ensuing day? Have I so-
 ' lemnly sought God in fervent and be-
 ' lieving Prayer, and diligent study of
 ' his

'his holy Word? And has not Spirit-
 'tual Life been wanting in my closet-
 'duties? Was it as much and more to
 'me that God was by, than if all the
 'World had seen me? Have I looked
 'strictly this day whatever Company I
 'have been in, both to my Thoughts and
 'Speeches, that neither were Light,
 'Vain, or Wicked? but Serious, Spirit-
 'tual, Heavenly, becoming my high
 'calling, and honourable profession of
 'Christianity? Especially have I careful-
 'ly avoided that common and hateful
 'sin of Tale-bearing and Pragmatical
 'medling with other mens matters?
 'Have I been diligent in my particular
 'calling, and that not for Covetousness,
 'but Conscience towards God? Have I
 'done to others as I would be done by?
 'Have I defrauded nor over-reached
 'none? Have I been sober and temperate
 'in the use of bodily refreshments? Have
 'I referred them to Gods glory, and sea-
 'soned my use of them with the reve-
 'rent mention of his name? Have I
 'medled with no recreations but what
 'were certainly lawful, and have I used
 'them lawfully? Have I neither been
 'cast down with causeless or excessive
 'grief

' grief, nor lifted up with carnal jollity
 ' and frothy merriment? Have I this day
 ' very seriously thought of my last day,
 ' and how have those thoughts affected
 ' me? Have I duly noticed and improved
 ' the Occurrences of Providence, and the
 ' influences of Grace this day? What
 ' special seasons of doing or receiving
 ' good have I had this day, and how have
 ' I laid hold of them or let them slip?
 ' What sense have I had of *Sions* suffer-
 ' ings, what Sympathy with afflicted bre-
 ' thren? Have I done my utmost to
 ' relieve and help those that are in
 ' want and distress? Have I been care-
 ' ful to keep up Family Religion, and
 ' conscionable in the discharge of re-
 ' lative duties this day? Has sincerity and
 ' cheerfulness rendred Christ's Yoak easie,
 ' and his burden light in all the variety
 ' of employments wherein I have this
 ' day served him? Thus *take Conscience*
 ' to task, about your daily behaviour, and
 ' labour to be *rightly affected* with all the
 ' *discoveries* you make of your *State, Frame*
 ' *and Way*. Further examine what tem-
 ' per and disposition of Soul you are now
 ' in, whether fit in some measure to
 ' draw nigh to God or not: Read the

‘ Scriptures, meditate on what you read,
 ‘ or on some other heart-affecting Sub-
 ‘ ject, and leave not till you feel your
 ‘ heart suitably moved therewith ; then
 ‘ pour out your Souls again to God in
 ‘ Prayer, and commit your Souls and Bo-
 ‘ dies, with Faith and Confidence, to his
 ‘ Love and Care. As you undress you,
 ‘ think, As I now put off my Cloaths, so
 ‘ I must ere long this Body ; As I now
 ‘ lie down in my bed, so shortly must I
 ‘ in the Grave : Think what an Image
 ‘ sleep is of death, and how easie (if God
 ‘ give the word) the passage is from the
 ‘ Image to the reality ; and how sure
 ‘ the sleep of death is to be followed with
 ‘ the morning of the Resurrection, when
 ‘ we shall awake never to sleep again.
 With such Meditations *close your Eyes,*
 and *lock out vanity from your hearts ;* and
 let your beloved Jesus Christ lie all night
 as a bundle of Myrrh betwixt your
 Breasts, *Cant. i. 13.* Thus will there be a
settled correspondence betwixt your Souls
 and Heaven, you will be *its care*, and it
 will be *your hope* ; and days so spent will
 not be to be repented of at last.

2. Having thus opened to you what it
 is to be in the fear of the Lord all the
 day

day long, and how Christians are to be daily taken up in the Religious employment of their whole time; I now proceed to shew you, *Why they are so to do,* and *what are the reasons and motives enforcing this Practice upon us.*

We are to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long, and every day to make Religion our business.

Reas. I. *Because this is to answer the Ends and Purposes for which God hath given us Life and Time.* Wise agents propound to themselves valuable ends in all they do; the infinite wisdom, therefore, cannot be thought to have made this lower World, and to have placed man (made after his own Image) therein, but upon very valuable considerations; not those indeed of profit to himself: (the absolute and compleat perfection of his nature barring all Impotency or defect to be assisted or supplied; Job xxxv. 6, 7. If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him, or what receiveth he of thine hand?) But the complacency of his own Will in the Communications of his Beneficence to his Creatures,

in proportion to their capacities of receiving:

To enlarge therefore our *receptive capacities*, that so we may reflect more of the lustre of the divine goodness, is the great end of our *being*; and likewise of our *continuance* and *support* therein: Now by nothing are our capacities more enlarged, than by such a continual being in the fear of the Lord as I have before described. For by *doing Gods Will* we become enlarged in Divine and Spiritual Knowledge, and our understanding, will and active Powers receive a joint improvement. He that doth the will of my Father (saith our Saviour) shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak it of my self, *Joh vii. 17.* and this is Life Eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, *Joh. xvii 3.* Knowledge is the ground-work of Holiness, and Holiness advanceth Knowledge; and to be thus daily improving in holy Light, Life and Love is that very end for which God made us at first, again new made us, redeeming us when we were lost and undone; and for which his providential care still continues and supports us in the World. Why were we not swallowed up

up of *Death* and *Damnation* when we had sinned, but that the dead praise not God? (*Psal.* cxv. 17.) Wherefore are we redeemed by the blood of Christ, but that we should be a peculiar people, zealous of good works? (*Tit.* ii. 14.) Why are we made partakers of a Divine Nature, but that we should cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and shewing forth the virtues and praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous Light? (*2 Pet.* i. 4. *2 Cor.* vii. 1. *1 Pet.* ii. 9.) All which we can never do but by denying Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and living Righteously, Soberly and Godly in this present World, *Tit.* ii. 12. So that while we live not to God we live beside the end of our being, we lose our time, and provoke God to strip us of a blessing we no better know how to value.

R. 2. *This is the way to secure our present peace, and future happiness.* There is no way to a settled grounded tranquillity of mind, but by a holy Life. Sin is the great make-bate in Kingdoms, Churches, Families; and it will never let that Soul enjoy

enjoy peace in which it resides *unpardoned* and *unmortified*: And these two always go together; *unmortified sin is ever unpardoned sin*, and *guilt* still makes the Soul *uneasie*. He must be an *Atheist* or a *Brute*, that can be secure and jolly while sin lieth at the door, (*Gen. iv. 7.*) like a Bailiff ready to drag him before the Supreme Judge, at whose Bar being condemned, he must be forthwith abandoned to Eternal Torments. What comfort can Pleasures, Honours or Profits yield to *that man* who is *awake*, and knows not but he must be in *Hell* to-morrow?

Besides, it is easie to demonstrate that the happiness of rational Creatures consists in *Communion with God*, of which we are altogether incapable whilst we lie wallowing in the mire of sin. God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity (*scil.* with approbation) *Evil shall not dwell with him*, *Hab. i. 13.* The conviction sinners have of this appears in their *shinings* to approach the Sovereign Majesty, especially in *secret acts* of Worship, after the commission of any grosser sin: And if we be in such a case that we dare not come to God, our Life must needs

needs be very uncomfortable. Hence the Prophet *Iſa. Lvii. 21. There is no peace (ſaith my God) to the wicked.* And the *Pſalmiſt, Pſal. Lxxiii. 27, 28. All they that are far from thee ſhall periſh ; but it is good for me to draw nigh to God.* Many complain of their preſent reſtleſs uncomfortable condition, but they neglect the true Method of cure ; they would have peace, but they will not crucifie the fleſh with its affections and luſts. Sinner, thou muſt either leave thy ſinful courſes, or be a continual torment and vexation to thy ſelf ; unleſs for a while thou ſhouldeſt in judgment be given over to a ſpirit of ſlumber, and then thou wilt ſhortly awake in unſufferable terrors. But the way to peace is to walk humbly with God, to be conſtant in the daily practice of true Piety. See *Pſal. cxix. 165. Great peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them, Gal. vi. 16. As many as walk according to this Rule, peace be on them, and on the Iſrael of God.* And as this is the way to preſent peace ; ſo it is alſo to future everlaſting Glory. To them who by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory, honour and immortality, God will render

render Eternal Life, *Rom. ii. 7.* There remains a Rest for the people of God, *Heb. iv. 9.* Without holiness no man shall see the Lord, *Heb. xii. 14.* They only who live to God here, are capable of living with him for ever hereafter. As ever therefore you value peace here, or glory hereafter, let it be your constant care to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

R. 3. Unless we thus make Religion our daily delightful Employment, we are ungrateful to God who daily loadeth us with his Benefits. Who gave thee thy Being? Who redeemed thy Life from Destruction, and thy Soul from Damnation? By whom are all the hairs of thy head numbred, that not one of them fall to the ground without his will? To whose care and kindness dost thou owe thy health, liberty, peace, plenty, quiet habitation, comfortable Relations, Gospel opportunities; thy share in Publick, National and Church Deliverances? Is it not God that holds thy Soul in Life, and suffers not thy feet to be moved? *Psal. Lxvi. 9.* Is it not the Father of mercies, that crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies? *Psal. ciii. 4.* Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases;

v. 3.

v. 3. Is it not his hand that holdeth thee out of Hell, and supporteth thee from sinking into the bottomless Pit? Is it not he that hath rescued thee as well as others ~~of late from the devouring Jaws of bloody Papists,~~ from an horrible slavery of *Body, Soul and Conscience*, to such as worship graven Images; from being compelled *first to worship, and then to chew and swallow* a bit of Bread, or a thin Wafer under the title and denomination of thy Lord God, Maker and Redeemer? And what return, thinkest thou, is due to God for such Mercies as these? Can any less suffice than that which the Apostle exhorts unto? *Rom. xii. 1. I beseech you therefore, Brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* And if we have once sincerely given up our selves to God, we shall then walk with him, and be in his fear all the day long; and if we refuse this, we are the most ungrateful wretches breathing. What Monsters of Ingratitude are we, if when God hath *made us, and redeemed us, and still preserveth us,* we deny him our service? especially when his service is perfect freedom, and in

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keeping

keeping his Commandments there is great Reward, *Psal. xix. 11.* God hath made nothing our *Duty*, but what is equally our *Privilege*: And when as an acknowledgment of former kindneses, God only requires that we should receive more at his hands, and yet we will not; we thereby render our selves such a composition of folly and ingratitude as is beyond parallel. Among Heathens Ingratitude to Benefactors is esteemed one of the most hainous crimes a man can be guilty of: So that it's become a common Proverb among them, *Ingratum dixeris & omnia*; when you have called a man ungrateful, you have said your worst of him. And if Ingratitude to fellow-creatures deserve so black a brand, what shall we think then of Ingratitude against our Sovereign Lord, the great Creator, and common Parent of Mankind? Shun therefore this foul blot by diligence and constancy in a holy walk.

R. 4. By walking thus with God we set others a good Example, and recommend Religion to the World. Thus we become the Salt of the Earth, the Lights of the World, a City set on an Hill, which cannot be hid; our Light so shines before men,

men, that they see our good conversations and glorifie our Heavenly Father, *Mat. v. 13, 14, 16.* A *holy Life is a continual Sermon.* Thus you may all be *Preachers*, without invading that Office, which it is the will of God should be *peculiar* to those whom he hath *specially qualified* for it, and *visibly separated* to it. When you are constantly and delightfully busied in the duties of Holiness, you manifest to others that Religion is not an *impracticable notion*, a meer pleasing speculation, but that the Rules of it may be complied with. Our Sermons here in the Pulpit would be much more effectual, if you would but live them over in your Closets, Shops, Fields, Families, and mutual converses in the World. O what a joy is it to Ministers, & what a glory to the Gospel of Christ, when we can point with our Fingers (as it were) and say, There, and there, and there are the Seals of our Ministry: There an ignorant man or woman instructed; a drunkard, or swearer, or sabbath-breaker, or unclean person reformed; a covetous muck-worm made free-hearted and open-handed; a hypocritical Formalist awakened to thorow seriousness in Religion; one that was formerly prayer-

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less,

less, of whom we can now say, Behold he prayeth ; a Family of the Devils Slaves and Servants, and the Worlds Drudges, that is now become a Church of Christ, having stated, orderly Worship, and ringing with the praises of God in emulation, as it were, of Heaven it self ; God's will being done in it as there it is done.

The holy Conversation of the Professors of Religion, is an *Instituted Means* of the conversion of the Atheistical, Infidel, Impenitent World : And if we deny them the benefit of this Means, we little know what we have to answer for, the Blood of how many Souls may be found in our Skirts : Whereas on the other hand, if by our holy Life, and good Example we turn many to righteousness, we shall shine as Stars, or as the Sun in the Kingdom of our Father, *Dan. xii. 3. Mat. xiii. 43.* By converting sinners thus from the evil of their ways, we shall save Souls from death, and cover the multitude of sins, *James v. 20.* This going before others with the light of a good Example, is a cheap, yea a gainful way of promoting their Salvation ; which is certainly the best work we can do in the World, and will yield us the most solid comfort

comfort in a dying hour. Oh! be not content to give others a *verbal commendation* of Religion, but let your lives tell them what an excellent thing it is.

R. 5. *We had need thus to improve every day, because we know not which shall be our last day:* Therefore if we would not lose our last day, let us take heed that we do not lose *any day*. We always carry (as it were) our lives in our hands, (*Psal. cxix. v. 109.*) Our breath is in our nostrils, and God can easily change our countenances, and send us away, (*Isa. ii. 22. Job xiv. 20.*) We all know we must die, but none of us knoweth the particular time, the year, month, week, day or hour when. Our Lord's coming, in this respect, is uncertain; whether at evening, or at midnight, or at the Cock-crowing; we ought therefore always to watch, that we may be in readiness, *Mark xiii. 35.* How would we spend that day which we knew before hand would be our *dying day*? Would we not be very serious? Would we not labour to keep our minds very composed? our hearts fixed? our thoughts and affections heavenly? I do not say we should spend the same time every day in *immediate acts of Devotion*

as we would do if we knew it to be our dying day ; nor that we should converse always with the *same solemnity*, as if we were under that apprehension : But we should every day take as much care to keep our selves from *all known sin*, and to be diligent in *every positive instance of our duty*, as if we knew we must end the day and our life together ; for we do not know but it may be so. Now, tell me, sinner, couldst thou be content to die a drunken Beast, so totally deprived of the use of thy reason, as not to be able to utter, with sense and seriousness, but so much as, Lord have mercy upon me ? Would it not be a terrible thing to go into Eternity (as some have done) with an *Oath* or *Curse* in thy Mouth ? What a case shouldst thou be in, thinkest thou, if the Dart of Vengeance should strike thorow thy Liver, whilst thou art in the *very act of filthy Lust*, and wallowing in impure Embraces ? If thy Breath should be stopped as thou art uttering a Lie, or a dead Palsie should benum thy Limbs while thou art driving a cheating or oppressive Bargain ? Surely there is no man so brutish but he would most earnestly deprecate so sad a doom ; and yet sinners
boldly

boldly venture on *these courses* daily, notwithstanding they know not but they may thereby expose themselves to so dismal a calamity: Whereas, if Death find us in the way of our *duty*, whatever that duty be, let it lye in never so ordinary or mean an Employment, we have cause of rejoicing, and not of fear or sorrow. When we have been most diligent in spending a day for God, we shall then be most willing (if the good pleasure of the Lord so be) to die at night: The weary Labourer hastens to receive his Wages, and cheerfully lyes down to rest,

R. 6. *The time is coming when we shall wish we had spent our days thus.* How irksom soever a Life of Strict Godliness may now seem to our carnal hearts, and corrupted natures, yet there is never a one of us but we shall shortly wish we had been *as holy as the holiest*, that we had made Religion our business, and been every day of our lives *in the fear of the Lord all the day long*. You that are now strong and healthful, and through the pride of your hearts forget God, so that God is not in all your thoughts; Who say to God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways, (*Psal.*

x. 4. *Job xxi. 14.*) Who esteem *fervent praying*, no better than *whining* and *canting*; and conscientious strictness in the Government of our selves but needless preciseness, and vain scrupulosity: Who count him that feareth an Oath, or refuseth an imposed Health, a morose Melancholick, an arrand Fanaticke, a silly Speaksby: Who pride your selves in the vainly assumed Titles of *the Wits*, as being got above the fear of power invisible, and disentangled from the Fetters wherewith Religion binds her Votaries: Who can please your senses, and gratifie your appetites in defiance of Almighty Justice, the threatned Everlasting Torments and all the *Fargan* (as with a *sneering smile* they are wont to call it) of the man in black; that as they would fain flatter themselves (and glad are they at heart when they can meet with any one so vile as to give them a colour for it) doth but *talk vehemently* against sin, for an hour or two in the Week, because it is *his trade*: There is not one of all these, I say, but will shortly *change his note*, and *turn his tune*: When Death knocks at the doors, and looks in at the Windows, and out at the Eyes of these
brisk

brisk merry Blades, these boon Companions; when nature fails; and their strength is gone, and their departing Soul *presageth irresistibly* it's everlasting duration: Oh how will they then bes fool themselves? How will their Consciences reproach them? How freely will they give themselves the Lie? How heartily will they retract their censures of the Godly, and with that they were not only almost, but altogether such as they? (*Acts xxvi. 29.*) And that they might die the death of the righteous, and their last end be like his, (*Numb. xxiii. 10.*) Assure your selves, Sirs, there is none of you that when you come to die, will repent that he hath praised so much, or lived so exactly, or mortified his flesh, and subjected his appetite to his reason with so much diligence; none repenteth then of the sufferings and scorns he hath undergone for Christ and a good Conscience. Men then cry out of their Gluttony, and Swearing, and Sabbath-breaking, and Hypocrisie; and not of their holiness, and circumspection, and sincerity; but with it had been a thousand times more than it was: ' And what thou wilt shortly with
' thou

‘thou hadst been, methinks if thou art
 ‘wise, it should be thy hearty study, and
 ‘chiefest care now to be.

R. 7. *We shall thus make evil days good to us*: Days of abounding iniquity in the World; days of sharp sufferings to our selves, whether from persecuting malice, or from the immediate hand of God; (as in one kind or other sufficient unto every day is the evil thereof, *Mat. vi. 34.*) Yet whatever be the *evil of the day*, it will be a *good day to us*, if we be *in the fear of the Lord all the day long*; for then we shall avoid much of the evil of the day, and what of it is unavoidable God will turn it to our good; for he hath said, All things shall work together for good to them that love him, *Rom. viii. 28.* There is no Antidote against daily temptations-like being in the fear of God; nor no support or comfort under *great troubles* like this, that they find us in the way of our duty. Nothing stilleth murmuring and complaining under our sharpest trials like a holy awe of God, and a sense of his presence and governing Providence. He that is in the fear of God will not use sinful shifts to escape sufferings, than which nothing sooner fills the
 Soul

Soul of any man, that is not of an utterly seared Conscience, with trouble and perplexity. The fear of God will wean us from the Love of the World, and will subdue those inordinate desires in us, which (since nothing that we can here compass can ever satisfy) must necessarily make us a torment to our selves: It will prick the bladder of pride, quench our covetous thirst after the Mammon of Unrighteousness, and blunt the Edge of our sensual Inclinations, that we shall be so far from esteeming any of these *our happiness*, that we shall count our selves much more happy in having grace to deny the immoderate gratifications of the animal Life, than in being never so fully possessed of whatsoever might conduce to our compli-ance with them. In a word, the fear of God powerfully prevailing in our hearts, would make *prosperity safe*, and *adversity easie* to us, it would make our worst days *good*, and our best days *better*; whereas he that lives and dies a stranger to this being *in the fear of the Lord all the day long*, though he live an hundred years in prosperity, yet it may be truly said, he hath not had *one good day*.

R. 8. *This will secure a blessing unto us and ours.* Religion entails a blessing upon Families; upon Persons, and their Posterity. Blessed is every one that feareth God, and that walketh in his ways, *Psal. cxxviii. 1.* God blessed the house of *Poriphar* for *Joseph's* sake, *Gen. xxxix. 5.* It is a promise to the truly godly man, that whatsoever he doth shall prosper, *Psal. i. 3.* Happy is the man that feareth always, *Prov. xxviii. 14.* The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: But he blebseth the habitation of the just, *Prov. iii. 33:* Read the 28th Chapter of *Deuteronomy*; what blessings are there promised to the careful observers of God's Law? Those that are truly Godly, God will pour out his Spirit upon their Seed, and his blessing upon their Offspring, *Isa. xlv. 3.* If we sincerely consecrate and devote our selves in the beginning of every day to God, we thereby entitle him to our *Persons, Possessions, and Performances*, and thereupon *all of ours* doth immediately become *his care*: He is as it were in equity bound to take care of his own. He never yet cast off any, that sincerely cast themselves upon him: And when we consider

sider how needful his blessing is to the Success of any thing that we go about; We cannot but think them happy that by taking God along with them continually, are secured of ~~that~~ without which all humane forecast and industry is *in vain* and to no purpose, *Psal. Cxxvii. 1, 2.* Whence come the Crosses, Losses, Vexations, and Ruines that are in many Families, but from mens *neglect* or *distrust* of God? When we cast him out of our thoughts, it is just with him to cast us out of his care.

R. 9. *If we live thus, though we die young, we shall have lived long enough, and if we die Old, we shall not have lived too long.* What an excellent thing now is Holiness and the fear of God, which reduceth short Life and long to an equality? He that in the time of his *Life* hath learned to know God and Jesus Christ, to Worship God in Spirit and in Truth, to secure to himself an happy being for Eternity, and to serve his Generation while he is in this World, hath lived much, though it be in a *little time*: Such a Child hath lived longer, than he that is as Old as *Jerusalem*, and yet remains ignorant of these things; I mean, as to the great ends

ends and purposes of living: For there are those of whom we may say, as *Seneca*, *non diu vixit, sed diu fuit*: Many have been long, that have lived but a little while. And further, if he whose walk and course we have been at large describing to you, if such a one I say live long, he hath no cause to repent of the time he hath sojourned here; though he have met with many Temptations and Afflictions, he hath thereby only had an opportunity of exercising and confirming his Faith, Hope, Love and other Graces, his patience hath had it's perfect work, and he hath brought forth fruit abounding to his account: A long Life well spent is a resemblance of, as well as a preparative to, Eternal Life. Gray-hairs found in the way of righteousness, are a Type and Emblem of an happy Eternity: Whereas the sinner of an hundred years old is accursed, and hath cause to lament that ever he had a being; he hath cause (were it possible) to cancel and blot out every day of his Life, each day having been only spent in treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of God's righteous Judgment, *Rom. ii. 5.*

R. 10. By such a holy improvement of the short and troublesom days of time, we shall secure to our selves an happy being throughout the long and endless days of Eternity. If we sow to the Spirit, we shall of the Spirit reap Life Everlasting, Gal. vi. 7, 8. If we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with him, 2 Tim. ii. 12. The good and faithful Servant shall enter into the joy of his Lord, Mat. xxv. 21. Wherefore, my beloved Brethren, be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58. God suffereth none of his faithful Servants to be *losers by him*, or any thing they do for his honour and glory. Our light afflictions which are but for a moment work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory; while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are Temporal, but the things that are not seen are Eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. Surely if we believe an eternity of happiness for holy Souls, we shall not think any pains in duty, or any patience in suffering, too much for it: Our discouraging apprehensions of the

the difficulty of duty, proceed much from the *Wavering* and *Weakness* of our Faith concerning the *Reality* and *Excellency* of the heavenly glory. If we lived as seeing him who is invisible, (*Heb. xi. 27.*) And as foreseeing that glory which is eternal; we should lead other manner of lives, both in respect of *grace* and *comfort*, than now we do. Who would not Watch and Pray, Toil and Labour, Suffer and Wait, that did soundly apprehend, and firmly believe, that the result of all would be, the Souls being for ever with the Lord? (*1 Thes. iv. 17.*) Oh the glory purchased with the redeemers blood, and which he hath as our forerunner taken possession of, what will it not excite and enable us to undertake and perform? Did we believe that the fervent, effectual Prayer of a righteous man availeth much (*Jam. v. 16.*) to the gaining of Eternal blessedness, we should not so *often omit*, nor so *lazily perform* that duty as we do. Did Faith enliven our Meditations of Heaven, we should be oftner in them, and continue at them longer, and with *more delight*. Did we look upon every alms given by us to the poor as a laying up

up treasure in Heaven, we should labour to be rich in good Works. Did we reckon that the more of the sufferings of Christ are *fulfilled in us* now, the more of the glory of Christ shall be *revealed in us* hereafter, we should even be *ambitious of Martyrdom*, and esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, *Heb. xi. 26.* But alas, we think Heaven may be had with less ado, or else we think so poorly of it as if it were scarce worth having. So that there is too much cause to take up concerning us the complaint of one of the Ancients, *Aut hoc non est Evangelium, aut nos non sumus Evangelici*, either this (that we have in our Bibles) is not the Gospel, or we are not the Gospellers; so wide is the difference between the *Gospel of Christ* and the *Lives of Christians*. But be assured, my friends, we must bring our hearts and lives to the Gospel, and make that the Rule of them, if ever we will be happy; For Christ will never bring down his Gospel to our hearts and lives. If we will be saved it must be *in his way*, and *on his Terms*, and he hath said, Without holiness no man shall see the Lord, *Heb. xii. 14.* And the

unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. vi. 9. For without are Dogs, &c. Rev. xxii. 15. Consider therefore, whether you will live a life of present ease, and be hereafter cast out into eternal Torments; or you will now painfully exercise your selves unto godliness, and approve your selves Christ's Servants, that you may hereafter be forever with him, and behold his glory, John xvii. 24. and share in that Rest that remaineth for the People of God, Heb. iv. 9.

Having now shewn you what it is to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long, and given you the Reasons which oblige every one of us to take care that we daily be so;

III. It remains that I point out to you those Inferences, and practical Conclusions that follow upon, and flow from the Truths we have hitherto been discoursing.

Inference I. Must we (as you have heard) be in the fear of the Lord all the day long? *What then shall we think of them that have no fear of God before their eyes? that are so far from making Religion*
their

their daily business, that they live every day as without God in the World? *Eph. ii. 12.* They say unto God, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways, Job. xxi. 14.* If it be so necessary to our present peace and future happiness (as hath been shewn) to walk with God continually, what a condition are they in that never took one step in Heavens way, or so much as once set their faces Sionward? *Jer. L. 5.* What shall we think of the *Atheistical Crew*, that call in question God's Being, and boldly deny his Providence? The *Infidel-scoffers* that deny Jesus to be the Son of God, and ridicule the sacred Records of Eternal Life, that deride all pretensions to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and hold the intercourse and communion of Souls with the Father of Spirits, to be no better than meer fancy and delusion? How are we to account of the *Hypocritical Race* of pretenders to that Religion they never felt the power of upon their hearts, who oft turn Infidels themselves, and draw others into the same condemnation? The *malignant Enemies* of practical Religion, who profess to love God, while they hate their Brethren to the very death,

for no other reason, but because they indeed love him? The *lovers of this World*, *Mammons* Idolatrous Worshipers, who know no godliness but gain, (1 Tim. vi. 5.) and who have no end of living, but to be rich, and to compass that will deny God, damn themselves, and destroy their Brethren? The *fond admirers of ease and pleasure*, that are dead while they live, (1 Tim. v. 6.) and are willing to purchase a dying Life with eternal Death, and exchange Angels fare for that of Swine, *lovers of Pleasures more than lovers of God?* 2 Tim. iii. 4. The *eager hunters after applause*, that value themselves by what others think of them, without staying to consider what they ought to think of themselves? *Those who seldom worship God so much as in outward appearance, and never in spirit and truth, who make no conscience of Relative duties, of diligence in their Callings, or of justice in their dealings; who know not how to govern either their Souls or their Bodies by the Rules of Religion, or the Laws of Sobriety; what can we think of all these but that they are evidently the Sons of Death?* They are in a sad and miserable condition, they live at random,
and

and must die *at a venture* ; for there can be no grounded assurance to such of an eternal well-being. Such as these make a hard shift to please themselves in the *course*, but will undoubtedly fool themselves in the *issue* of their Life ; they will one day wish they had not lived at all, rather than to have lived thus. A Life void of *care*, commonly ends in a Death void of *hope*. As ever therefore you would die the death of the righteous, see that you live the life of the righteous ; and then, and not otherwise, your last end shall be like his, *Numb. xxiii. 10.*

*Infer. II. If we must be in the fear of the Lord every day, much more on the Lords day. We have shewn you how you must in a sound sense make every day a Sabbath, by working for God, and resting in him, and diligent preparing for an eternal Sabbath with him ; but you are not to pretend this in excuse for your neglect of sanctifying strictly the Christian Sabbath, the first day of the week, the day which the Lord hath made, (*Psal. cxviii. 24.*) in which he calleth us to rejoyce and be glad : In which we celebrate the memorial of our Lord's Resurrection,*

surrection, and consequently of the whole
 work of our Redemption by him. If
 we must walk with God *every day, much*
more on this day; to which a special blef-
 sing is annexed, and on which we have
 special advantages for the service of
 God, and the salvation of our Souls. The
 cavils of any against the strict observa-
 tion of the Lord's day, are easily an-
 swered by any one that observeth the
 dependence of the Life of practical Re-
 ligion hereupon. I will be bold to say
 it, 'The power of Religion lives or dies
 ' according as Sabbath-sanctification is
 ' kept up, or let fall in Churches, Fa-
 ' milies or Souls. Of *other days* you are
 to consecrate *a part* to Religious exer-
 cises, *Acts* of Devotion and Worship;
 but *this day is wholly* to be taken up
 therein. Only God indulgeth us in *works*
of true necessity, and obligeth us to *acts*
of Charity thereon, giving mercy the pre-
 ference even to Sacrifice.

I will here briefly heap together a few
 Directions for Sabbath-sanctification.

I. Discern your obligation to it in point
 of duty, and value it as your Privilege.
 That God have a seventh part of our time
 for his Solemn Worship, is the kernel

of

of the fourth Commandment, and of perpetual obligation, and seems to have been a part of Gods Law to Adam, even in the state of Innocence. God appointed and blessed the seventh day of the week, before Christ's coming in the flesh, for a weekly Sabbath, in commemoration of the worldly Creation; and added a Law of Ceremonious Rest to the Jews, as a part of their Pædagogy, and a shadow of things to come, now done away. Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week, and after his Ascension on that day, poured forth his Spirit on his Apostles, to qualifie them to declare his Will to Man-kind in all things concerning Salvation. They held and settled Church Assemblies on the first day of the week, and called it, by way of approbation, *The Lords day*, Rev. i. 10. And the Universal Church (as far as appears from Church History, without the least contradiction till our times; see Dr. Young's *Dies Dominica*, and Mr. Baxter's *Divine Appointment of the Lords-day*) kept this day, and no other, as the day of stated weekly Solemnities; and God was with them, and owned and honoured their Assemblies with his gracious

cious presence: And therefore it seems
 the effect of *strange weakness*, or in-
 tolerable perverseness, for any now
 in these last days, to question what
 the Universal Church hath so long, on
 so good reason, practised. The Lords-day
 as the *Christian Sabbath*, I take to have
 been instituted by Christ, if not while
 personally on Earth, yet by his Spirit in
 his Apostles: And as an attentive Reader
 of the Scriptures, may there discern clear
 intimations of this, so the current practice
 of the Christian Church in all times and
 places, doth fully confirm it. Nor ought
 we to esteem it any other than a *very*
great Privilege, that we may have a day
 in seven, to study the Works and Word
 of God, to praise his holy Name, to
 worship him in the Assemblies of his
 Saints, to learn his Will for our Salva-
 tion. A holy Soul must needs reckon
 it self in the Confines of Heaven while
 thus employed, and blest himself that he
 may sometimes retire thus from the
 World, and enjoy a holy freedom for
 spiritual delights, and glad some prepara-
 tions for Eternal Joy.

2. Prepare for this blessed day before it
 come: Think of it, and long for it, eve-

ry day, but especially the Evening before; rid your *hands* in good time of worldly business, and your *hearts* of worldly cares: Read, pray, meditate, catechise your Families; call your selves and yours to an account of what you and they heard the Lords-day before; and, if it may be, get to bed sooner that night than you use to do of other nights, that so you may be under no temptation to snore away that precious morning, on which our Lord (in testimony of the accomplishment of our Redemption) rose so very early.

3. *Be sure to be up as early on the Lords-day morning, as is consistent with your fitness for the blessed Employments of it: And let the thoughts of Redeeming Love season your hearts at first awaking.*

4. *Redeem time, that you may add something to your daily Devotions, both in Family and Closet, and not be put to cut them short.*

5. *Go with the first to Publick Assemblies; but go with hearts prepared, and behave your selves there with Reverence, Attention, and Affection. Pray in prayer; hear as for the Life of your Souls, and praise God with joy and*
G
alacrity

alacrity; stay the Blessing, and rush not into, or out of Church Assemblies in a rude and hasty manner: Consider *God's Angels* are there (1 Cor. xi. 10.) and view your behaviour; nay, *the God of Angels* he looks on.

6. *After Publick Worship, retire to examine how you have behaved your selves there:* Call to mind what you have heard, digest it by prayer and meditation, and when you have opportunity, fix it on your hearts and memories by conferring of it, especially with your inferiours, Children and Servants, whom you may command thereto.

7. *Watch Sabbath time in the Intervals of it, especially at Meals, that they run not waste.* Quicken your selves and others, to thankfulness and joy, with the serious mention of Redeeming Love. Take heed of vain talk, and idle unprofitable musings. Let the variety of holy employments maintain your delight in them.

8. *Close the day in God's fear.* Reckon your Sabbaths gains; consider your actions, and the frame of your Souls in them; fix the Word of the day upon your hearts, and resolve by the Grace of God to be found in the sincere and speedy

speedy practice of it. He who thus regardeth a day unto the Lord, (*Rom. xiv. 6.*) shall comfortably experience that the Lords-day hath the seventh days blessing transferred unto it, and an additional blessing of its own conferred upon it.

Infer. III. Seriousness in Religion is not more ado than needs. Strictness is not Fanaticism, Religion, in all its parts, is our reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. We do not serve God for nought: (that true enough, though once said by the Father of Lies, Job i. 9.) In keeping Gods Commandments there is great reward, Psal. xix. 11. All this work you have heard laid open, is of Gods setting us, and we may be sure he will not suffer us to be losers by our care to please him. And besides, the variety of Employments allotted to us (which sinners count their burden, and their cumber) is indeed that which sweetens Religion unto holy Souls. It is not the hardness of the work in it self, but the unsuitableness of it to our Spirits, that maketh it so uneasy to the most; and when Grace hath removed that, the Soul goes on with

cheerfulness in those ways which sinners cannot endure to tread, and do all they can to discourage others from walking in. When therefore sinners entice thee from the ways of godliness, and tell thee, What needeth so much ado? sure God is more merciful than to damn men for neglect of secret prayer, for vain thoughts, for foolish speeches for taking now and then a Cup of *Nimis*, for making the best of their own, &c. Sure God won't shut all out of Heaven but a few Puritans and Precisians; so much reading and praying, &c. will but mope you, or make you melancholy, or mad; take care of thy Body, and make sure of thy Estate, and trust God with thy Soul: When, I say, sinners do thus entice thee, consent thou not, *Prov. i. 10.* *Let no man deceive you with vain words,* *Eph. v. 6.* Tell them, God knows better who he will save, and who he will damn, than any of they; and he hath said, *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord*; He will pour out his fury upon the Families that call not upon his Name: Life and Death are in the power of the Tongue: Drunkards (among others) shall not inherit the Kingdom of

of God: Covetousness is Idolatry: It is a little Flock our Heavenly Father will give his Kingdom to: The Righteous are scarcely saved: The Kingdom of God consists in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost. What is a man profited if he gain the whole World, and lose himself, or be cast away? Tell them, these are the true sayings of God; (-see *Heb. xii. 14. Jer. x. 25. Prov. xviii. 21. 1 Cor. vi. 10. Col. iii. 5. Luke xii. 32. 1 Pet. iv. v. 18. Rom. xiv. 17. Luke ix. 25.*) And you should be a Fool indeed if you should believe the silly sayings of blind Earth-worms, and prejudiced unexperienced Sots, before the Word of the Living and True God, the Infinite and Eternal Wisdom,

Infer. IV. What cause have we to lament the Fall of our First Parents, by which we are disabled for this excellent Life? God Created Man holy and happy, with wisdom to know his Duty, and power to do it, and holy Love to encline him to the performance of it. It was easie for Adam to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long; though

it was possible for him, by a faulty omission of Reasons government over the inferiour powers of the Soul, to depart there-from. And such was the mutability of his Will, that, being assaulted by Temptation, he wretchedly yielded, and so betrayed himself and his Posterity into a forlorn state of wretchedness and impotency; so that now we have none of us by nature light enough to discern, nor ability to perform aright our Duty, in the most ordinary instances of Life. Certain it is, we have lost that *Moral Liberty of Will* which was the glory of Innocent Adam, and had been our glory, had he stood and remained in his Integrity. But now the Crown is fallen from our Heads; woe unto us that we have sinned! *Lam. v. 16.* We may well name ours *Ichabod*, for the glory is departed from us, *1 Sam. iv. 21.* We are all shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin. *Psal. Li. 5.* In our flesh dwelleth no good thing; when we would do good, evil is present with us: O wretched ones that we are, who shall deliver us from the body of this death! *Rom. vii. 18, 21, 24.* By one man sin entred into the

the World, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, Rom. v. 12. We have cause to look our hearts and lives in the glass of God's Law, and cry out as once a good Man did after a long Sicknes, looking his Face in a Glass, and beholding his pale Cheeks and meager Visage, *Ab! Adam* (saith he) *Adam, what hast thou done?* Oh! what a condition are we who sinned in *Adam* fallen from? and what a sad estate are we fallen into? our Minds are dark, our Wills perverse, our Affections froward, &c. we cannot of our selves think one good thought, if we might have Heaven and Eternal happiness for our pains, 2 Cor. iii. 5. We cannot pray, nor read, nor hear, nor do any spiritual Duty aright. We have an hereditary Sicknes that threatens us with death, in that it makes us loath the means of Life. Oh what an averseness to, and unfitness for secret prayer, and meditation, and examining themselves do even awakened sinners find and feel, till special Grace come in to their aid? What shifting, what shuffling, what excuses, what slighness, what slubbering over of Duties is there?

there? In a word, *Adam's Fall* hath rendered us all utterly unable of our selves to do aright any duty to God, our Neighbour, or our selves.

Infer. V. What cause have we all to lament our past days, because they have been in too great a measure lost days? If you look back upon the description that hath been laid before you of the everyday work and walk of a serious practical Christian, and consider how every day of your Life hath been spent since you came to the use of reason, I fear you will most of you have cause to cry out, not only with the Emperour Augustus, Hem, amici, diem perdididi! Alas, my Friends, I have lost a day! But Heu, vitam perdididi! Alas, I have lost my whole Life! Alas, How have our days been squandered away, and our time lavished out upon unprofitable vanities? Ask one man what he hath been doing ever since he came into the World? And he must (if he say true) tell you he hath been labouring for the meat that perisheth, he hath been toiling and drudging to add house to house, and lay field to field, he hath been loading himself with thick Clay,

Clay, he hath been very throng a getting that together that he knoweth not how soon he must leave behind him, he cannot tell but before to morrow: Ask another, he will tell you he hath been at the *Butterflies work*, painting his wings, tricking and trimming, and making himself fine, and smooth, and brisk, and gay, with a world of art and cost, setting himself out to the view of beholders; and to be thought handsom he was willing to wave all the real accomplishments of humanity; and little thinks the poor spark how soon all his trimming must be laid aside, and how courfly a fit of sickness, and much more two or three days Lodging in the Grave will make him look: Another, (or perhaps the same,) if you question him when he is in the right mood to give you an answer, will tell you he has been Drinking, Dancing, Singing, Feasting, dallying all his days; Ransacking all the avenues of pleasure, and racking nature to make her confess some *secret source* of delight, and trying untrodden Paths of Luxury, that if it were possible some new mode of sensual gratification might be found, on which the Preacher had
not

there? In a word, *Adam's Fall* hath rendered us all utterly unable of our selves to do aright any duty to God, our Neighbour, or our selves.

Infer. V. What cause have we all to lament our past days, because they have been in too great a measure lost days? If you look back upon the description that hath been laid before you of the everyday work and walk of a serious practical Christian, and consider how every day of your Life hath been spent since you came to the use of reason, I fear you will most of you have cause to cry out, not only with the Emperour Augustus, Hem, amici, diem perdidit! Alas, my Friends, I have lost a day! But Hen, vitam perdidit! Alas, I have lost my whole Life! Alas, How have our days been squandered away, and our time lavished out upon unprofitable vanities? Ask one man what he hath been doing ever since he came into the World? And he must (if he say true) tell you he hath been labouring for the meat that perisheth, he hath been toiling and drudging to add house to house, and lay field to field, he hath been loading himself with thick Clay,

Clay, he hath been very throng a getting that together that he knoweth not how soon he must leave behind him, he cannot tell but before to morrow: Ask another, he will tell you he hath been at the *Butterflies work*, painting his wings, tricking and trimming, and making himself fine, and smooth, and brisk, and gay, with a world of art and cost, setting himself out to the view of beholders; and to be thought handsom he was willing to wave all the real accomplishments of humanity; and little thinks the poor spark how soon all his trimming must be laid aside, and how courfly a fit of sickness, and much more two or three days Lodging in the Grave will make him look: Another, (or perhaps the same,) if you question him when he is in the right mood to give you an answer, will tell you he has been Drinking, Dancing, Singing, Feasting, dallying all his days; Ransacking all the avenues of pleasure, and racking nature to make her confess some *secret source* of delight, and trying untrodden Paths of Luxury, that if it were possible some new mode of sensual gratification might be found, on which the Preacher had not

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not written, *Faculty of Mania*; but know,
 O fleshly wretch, that for all these things
 God will bring thee into Judgment,
Ecel. xi. 9. Another hath been climb-
 ing hard to reach the topmost Pinacle
 of Honour, Cringing, Bribing, Flatter-
 ing to get an opportunity to wrong o-
 thers, and ruine himself; for man be-
 ing in honour abideth not, he is like the
 Beasts that perish, *Psal. Lix. 12.* Now
 alas, what poor employments are these
 for that time on which Eternity de-
 pends! And yet how few (even among
 Christians) lay out their time to any
 better purposes? Well, Sirs, all your
 time that is not laid out for God's glory,
 the good of others, and the Salvation of
 your Souls, is lost time, you had as good,
 nay better, all that time have been out
 of Being. Oh what a World of time do
 the most give away to Death? People
 complain of the shortness of Life, and
 yet act as if they thought it too long. What
 cause have most of us to sit down and
 sadly say, What have I been doing hi-
 therto? Am I not even a dying, be-
 fore I have begun to live? And Oh that
 men would sit down and think seriously
 of it, there might be then some hope
 that

that they would at last in earnest begin to do that, which they should have been doing all this while.

Infer. VI. What need have we to implore the Grace and Spirit of Christ, to encline and enable us, so direct and assist us in this necessary work? We have a great deal of work to do, and it must be done, and we cannot do it of our selves; what more reasonable then, than that we should speedily and carefully look out for help? The great Gospel promise is the Promise of the Spirit, we ought therefore to plead it in Christ's name with God the Father, since he hath said he will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, Luke xi. 13. If we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his, Rom. viii. 9. And without special relation to him, and interest in him, we cannot groundedly hope for assistance from him, without whom yet we can do nothing, Job. xv. 5. We are dark, we therefore need the Spirit to enlighten us; we are weak, we need him to strengthen us; we are wavering, we need him to settle and fix us; we are oft dejected and discouraged, we then need him to comfort and confirm

confirm us. Since then we so greatly need this blessing on all accounts, how earnest and importunate should we be for it? How observant of all the blessed Spirits accesses to, and recesses from our Souls? How careful to cherish his blessed motions? How loath to grieve our guide? If our Baptism in his name were not a nullity (which many at least of our scoffers are not yet arrived at the impudence to assert) our pretensions to his assistance cannot be justly charged to be *Enthusiastical*; provided our claims be *proportioned to the ends of our Baptismal Covenant relation to the Holy Ghost*, and our holiness of Life and Conversation manifest their *reality*. As *Enthusiasm* (though it seem to look another way) leads to *Infidelity*; so *Infidelity* too often, and never more than of late, masks it self under the veil of a vehement zeal against *Enthusiasm*: But a good understanding of our Baptism, and a practical experience of the main vital principles of Christianity therein contained, would be an effectual cure of both. When we know what it is to have the Spirit of Life, living and working in our Souls, as our Souls

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in our Bodies, then, and *not till then*, shall we know what it is to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long: Some forced motions in the externals of Religion we may have before, but it is the Spirit that quickeneth, *Joh. vi. 23.* And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there, and there only is true Liberty, (*2 Cor. iii. 17.*) Even such as whereby we run the ways of God's Commandments with enlarged hearts, *Psal. Cxix. 32.*

Infer. VII. *What care should Parents take to begin, in a way of holy Education, with their Children betimes; that the best course in the World may not seem difficult and uneasy to them by disuse?* The wise man bids, train up a Child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, *Prov. xxii. 6.* And undoubtedly one great reason why many frame so *awkwardly*, in the matters of Religion, is because they were so long suffered to be utterly unacquainted with them. O what a difference do Ministers usually find, as to the Success of their Preaching, between catechised and uncatechised youth? Oh how hard is it to get people in years, that have been

been left in ignorance till then, to learn to understand but the *most plain and common* principles of Religion, through want of early instruction, when we tell men of being in the fear of the Lord continually, the most know nothing what we mean; tell them of the necessity of Repentance, Faith and Holiness in order to Eternal Life, and they understand not what they hear; speak to them of the blessed Trinity, in whose name they were baptized, of the necessity of the Spirits help, and of regeneration; and it is all one as if we spoke to them in Greek or Arabick; their minds have never *been used* to such matters. O you that desire it should be otherwise with yours, take care of their early instruction, tell them betimes of their duty in order to Salvation and Eternal happiness, and acquaint them with the holy Scriptures, teach them to pray, set before them briefly and plainly the order of their daily duty to God, their Neighbours and themselves, help them to govern their appetites and passions by reason and the Word of God, tell them what Christ hath suffered in their stead, what benefits he hath purchased for

for them by his death, and how those
 benefits come to be applyed to the Soules
 of his chosen: Labour to work things
 down into their hearts, and get them
 to feel what they know: This is Gods
 work, but it is to be expected in Con-
 junction with your endeavours, and Child-
 ren thus initiated belesmes rarely do
 amiss, whereas a Child left to himself
 causeth shame, (Prov. xxix. 15.) Dis-
 honours God, grieves his Parents, and
 damns himself.

Infer. VIII. *What great need there is*
for us to keep the Christian hopes in constant
believing view, that by them we may be en-
couraged to so great and difficult work. The
 Just shall live by his Faith, *Hab. ii. 4.*
 Now Faith is the Substance of things
 hoped for, the evidence of things not
 seen, *Heb. xi. 1.* Moses had respect un-
 to the recompence of reward, *Heb.*
xi. 26. And our Lord himself endured
 the Cross and despised the shame, for
 the joy that was set before him, *Heb.*
xii. 2. Christianity were not the best
 Religion, if it did not propound to us the
 best Reward, and that with the fullest
 and clearest evidence; and we are not
 Christi-

Christians if the hope of that reward act
 is not in our endeavours of conformity
 to its blessed Precepts: So widely are
 they out, that cry down diligence in
 the Christian Work and Race, in ex-
 pectation of the Rewards of Eternal
 Glory, as mercenary, and that talk of
 quenching Hell, and burning Heaven,
 to prove the sincerity of their obedi-
 ence. God help me to obey and suf-
 fer for the joy set before me, and I
 doubt not but I shall be for ever in
 that Heaven where Jesus Christ, now
 is, and let those that hope to fare bet-
 ter in *new-fangled ways* of their own
 devising, let them I say, at long run
 bragg as they speed. Man is a crea-
 ture the very frame and constitution
 of whose Soul shews him made to be
 governed by *Hopes and Fears*; And
 no hopes like those of a happiness com-
 pleat and everlasting. The Apostoli-
 cal Canon therefore is, *Heb. vi. 11, 12.*
 And we desire that every one of you
 do shew the same diligence to the full
 assurance of hope unto the end; that
 ye be not slothful, but followers of
 them who through Faith and Patience
 inherit the Promises. He that will
 be

be an Active, Useful, Exemplary, Persevering Christian, must *clear* and *settle* well his hope of Everlasting Life, as that which God who cannot lye hath promised, and often *review* it by believing Meditation; nothing *quickens*, nothing *supports* like this: Am I lazing and slugging, and moving heavily in the ways of God? What a Spur is such a thought as this? Do I now act as becomes a Candidate for Eternal Glory, an Expectant of Heavenly Felicity? Would this pace content me if I now saw Heaven open to my bodily Eyes? And is it not *equally certain* as if I did? So when sinking into discouragement, when drooping and desponding, when horribly afraid of suffering or the like; say, O my Soul, doth this become a Christian, a Child of God, an Heir, a Coheir with Christ? What, a Kings Son, the King of Heavens Son, the Heir of a Kingdom, and such a Kingdom! And thus lean from day to day? (allusion to 2 Sam. xiii. 4.) Oh Sirs, little do we think what a vigorous Instrument of an holy Life the Christian hope in our Souls would prove, were we more careful to get it

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firmly rooted there, and then to maintain it in its lively act and powerful exercise.

Infer. IX. How much is it the concernment of all that would be Christians indeed, to get right notions of Religion? That our Duty is our Interest, a real pleasure and advancement to our Souls? 'Tis wrong conceits of Religion, and the nature of the work it puts us upon, that scareth so many from it. Men will not hear of becoming Religious, because they take it to be what it really is not, and have no right understanding what indeed it is. Men think Religion ties them up from all that is grateful, and fills them continually with fear and sorrow, and unhinges them for business, unfits them for action, and calls them to part with all that they at present count valuable, and giveth them nothing, or next to nothing in exchange. This is the notion the World hath commonly of Religion; and no wonder if in this dress it appear very terrible, and be so far from alluring Lovers, that it affright Spectators. But I pray you, Sirs, you that

that labour under these prejudices, come a little nearer, and take a better prospect of Religion before you renounce her utterly: It may be she is not what you take her for, perhaps she hath charms you never yet discovered; I hope you will not think it impossible, but *Solomon* might be in the right, when he said of Wisdom, or true Religion, *All her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace, Prov. iii. 17.* What if upon enquiry all your *Objections* against Religion prove *calumnies*? What if upon a true opening of the case, your *Scruples* all vanish, and a little light of sober Reason dispel the mists you have endeavoured to benight her with? I hope you will then come over to that side which hitherto you have so violently opposed, and so malignantly derided: Come then, and let us reason together: If Religion debar you of no *true pleasure*, but call you to exchange sordid and perishing ones, for those that are noble and durable, will you then become her *Votary*? Why, so it is; Religion teaches you *Temperance* in the use of bodily *Pleasures*, which alone

gives them their *true relish*, and renders them *safe to be enjoyed*; and (which is of more important consideration) makes their use consistent with the obtaining of those *better Pleasures*, whereof she allows and offers you, freer and fuller draughts, and whereof you can never have *too much*, and shall not finally want *enough*. The pleasures of Knowledge and Love are *ever perfecting* till we come to glory, immediately upon our entrance whereunto they are *perfect-ed* to satisfaction, though according to some, (see the ingenious discourse of a nameless Author, called, *The Future State*) even there they are in a state of perpetual progress and advance.

Obj. But it may be you will say, Surely Religion cannot be a state of Joy, when men pass into it thorow so many fears and sorrows, and when the great Author of it hath clad it in mourning; saying, *Blessed are they that mourn*, *Matth. v. 4.*

Sol. I answer, Religion only calleth for so much sorrow as is consistent with, or conducive to the greatest joy; and debarreth us only of such joys as will end in everlasting sorrows. For Religion's

gion's taking men off from business, or unfitting them for it, it is a vain cavil, and contradicted by the *Experience of all Ages*; For in every Age, some of the most active and eminent have been jointly noted for Religion, and for Wisdom, Courage and Success in the management of Publick Affairs, both in War and Peace; as *Abraham, David, Nehemiah*, and others. The truth is, Religion, in these things, changeth not mens natural *Temper* and *Endowments*, but taking them as it findeth them, *improves* and *perfects* them. And for what Religion obligeth us to forego, it is demonstrable that it calleth us to *quit nothing* but what may well be spared; and for what is not consistent with our happiness, giveth us in exchange what is alone constituent of it. And if its worst Enemies have no more to say against it, but that which is so easily refutable, who can wonder if (notwithstanding all the scorns of profane wits) heavenly Wisdom be still justified of her Children? (*Matth. xi. 19.*) as she will shortly more fully be by her great Author, who is able to defend her against all her profane contemners, and malignant opposers.

Let us then Give these liberals for all such
 to know by experience how sweet and comfort-
 able nothing is it to be daily taken up in the
 lively, spiritual performance of Religious Ex-
 ercises to pity, and by counsel, prayer and
 example, do all they can to help the rest
 (who are the most) of Mankind, you of
 professed Christians, that live as without
 God in the World, having neither skill nor
 will to holy Employments, or the due improve-
 ment of their Time. It is a doleful thing
 to take a considerate view of the world,
 and think what God made man, and pla-
 ced him upon the Earth for, and what
 we are redeemed for, and what large
 provision of help there is in the Gospel
 for lost Mankind, and yet how few do
 in any measure answer the end of their
 Beings, or act like persons that have any
 hope of ~~seeing~~ benefit by Jesus Christ.
 Not only the Heathen and Mahometan
 World, and the obstinate Infidel Jews,
 and the Idolatrous persecuting Papists;
 but alas, the generality of the Reformed
 Churches, are a sight fit to make a sen-
 sible heart bleed; abounding so with
 ignorance, profaneness, worldliness, sen-
 suality, corruption in V Vorship, Church-
 tyranny, Heresies, Schisms, Divisions,
 Envy.

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Envyings, and bitter Zeal, that the *Tares* do in a manner hide the *Wheat*; and the Faith even of good men is sometimes put to stagger at the Promise, *That the gates of Hell shall not prevail, Mat. xvi. 18.* But oh that we did rather in our places all do our utmost to promote its accomplishment! by personal Reformation, by fervent Prayer, by due instructing and calling upon others, and setting them a good Example, by mourning for the sins of the Times, and pleading with God his Promises for the Remnant of his People. If we thus hope, and quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord, (*Lam. iii. 26.*) we may yet live to see the eminent returns of Prayer, and the glorious accomplishment of Prophecies and Promises, when Salvation shall be to God's *Israel* for *VValls* and *Bulwarks, Isa. xxvi. 1.* and when *Jerusalem's VValls* shall be Salvation, and her Gates praise, *Isa. Lx. 18.* Even so come Lord Jesus, come quickly. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

*Read thro' this excellent little
book. Nov^r 1822 J. H.*